

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of improving the ~~operation~~ functionality of a test strip, said test strip being made of a plurality of overlapping layers of material, each of said layers having micro-pores, said test strip designed to wick a liquid from one end of the test strip to the opposite end of the test strip, said method comprising the steps of:

flexing the test strip in order to elongate the micro-pores, the flexing results in at least an inner [side] layer and at least an outer [side] layer of the test strip, said flexing made in a manner that avoids the ~~formation of folds~~ separation of said layers.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising flexing the test strip so that it is positioned in multiple planes, and supporting said test strip – at least partially – on its inner side to further avoid the separation of said layers ~~formation of folds~~.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of creating pressure points at specific places on the test strip that enhances the function of the test strip by preventing the compression to said at least one inner layer which is normally associated with the flexing of test strips and further avoiding the separation of said layers ~~of folds on the inner side~~ of said test strip.

4. (Currently Amended) An improved chemically-impregnated test strip, said test strip being made of a plurality of overlapping layers of material, each of said layers [and] having micro-pores, said test strip designed to wick a liquid from one end of the test strip to the opposite end of the test strip in order to test a specimen, the improvement comprising:

means for physically bending said test strip in order to elongate the micro-pores [by physically bending the test strip, thereby improving] and improve the capillary flow of

any liquid specimen that contacts the test strip, said [elongating] elongation is made in the direction of the intended liquid flow and is made without promoting the separation of said plurality of layers of material in order to improve the accuracy of said test strip ~~formation of folds on the strip.~~

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The improved test strip of claim 4 wherein the end of the test strip intended to be dipped into the liquid specimen is tapered.

8. (Currently Amended) The improved test strip of claim 4 wherein said means for bending is a collar having [further comprising] a living hinge designed to apply controlled pressure at a specific position on the test strip.

9. (New) The improved test strip of claim 8 wherein the end of the test strip intended to be dipped into the liquid specimen is tapered.

10. (New) The test strip of claim 9 wherein the test strip is bent so that a first portion of said test strip including said end of test strip intended to be dipped into the liquid specimen lies in a vertical plane and a second portion of said test strip including the opposite end of the test strip lies in a horizontal plane, said collar being positioned on the first portion of said test strip.